



Commandant's NOTE

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MARKSMANSHIP: A NEW FOCUS

The Infantry's primary role on the modern battlefield remains to close with and destroy the enemy. The awesome lethality of modern weapon systems resulting from advances in the potential combat power of current and future weapon systems and counter-systems may begin to overshadow the close combat role of the Infantryman. We must remain cognizant of the relative combat power wielded by the Infantryman, however, and its superior effects in close combat operations.

Operation JUST CAUSE and our Army's current efforts in Operation DESERT SHIELD clearly demonstrate the rapid projection of the Infantry's potential combat power in reaction to hostilities throughout the world. The skills that have sustained Infantrymen on the battlefield for more than 200 years—marksmanship, use of terrain, the estimate process, drills—remain the foundation of an Infantryman's fighting ability. Regardless of the sophistication of his weapon systems, the Infantryman will always maintain an individual weapon designed for close combat with the enemy.

The nature of an Infantryman's profession therefore requires of him, among other things, physical prowess and the ability to produce accurate fire with small arms. Unfortunately, we tend to emphasize the former more than we do the latter.

Marksmanship is a skill in which Infantrymen should take pride. Recently, the commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, General John Foss, observed that we are the only major army in the world that has the same rifle marksmanship standards for Infantrymen that it

has for cooks. He also pointed out that our Infantry squads and platoons will often live or die on the basis of their ability to place accurate fire on the enemy. In brief, he was saying that it is time that the Infantry moved to precision marksmanship.

This approach requires command emphasis and more frequent marksmanship training at all levels. The Infantry School has been developing new marksmanship proficiency requirements and standards for Infantrymen.

Currently, the approved TRADOC program of instruction (POI) contains 70 hours of basic rifle marksmanship (BRM) taught during basic combat training and Infantry common-core One Station Unit Training (OSUT). For each segment of training, there are standards, or "gates," that the soldiers must achieve before they are permitted to fire the Army qualification table to standard. A few weeks later, the soldiers in OSUT who have military occupational specialty (MOS) 11B must take an additional 24 hours of advanced rifle marksmanship (ARM). This program includes a second qualification table on which the standard is 18 hits out of 50, using moving and stationary targets.

Although our Infantry OSUT soldiers are now demonstrating rifle proficiency well above the minimum requirements, we believe that Infantrymen should be able to meet higher standards. To make this happen, the 29th Infantry Regiment is developing a new Infantry marksmanship program and OSUT POI. Both are scheduled for implementation

during Fiscal Year 1991. The first phase of this three-phase test is complete, and the results are being incorporated, on a test basis, into a revised 13-day OSUT marksmanship program. Test firing will be completed in November 1990.

The program is designed to produce an Infantryman who is more capable of delivering accurate fire at extended ranges, under NBC and night conditions, against fixed and moving targets. Its emphasis is on graduating OSUT soldiers who have a solid foundation in the basics of marksmanship and who are more capable of retaining their marksmanship skills after they graduate. The draft POI incorporates more NBC and night firing, includes two days of precision fire at distances out to 550 meters, and examines the utility of device-based training using the Weaponeer and the multipurpose arcade combat simulator (MACS). These training devices have been modified to include combat record fire and advanced combat record fire scenarios that can help determine and sustain a firer's skill level.

Since this is an emerging process, the exact nature of the course of fire requirements and qualifications and performance standards are still being refined. It is already clear, however, that our Infantry units will have to be far better prepared and devote more time to marksmanship training than they are currently doing if they are to meet and sustain the planned higher proficiency levels in our Infantry soldiers.

In addition to developing an improved Infantry

marksmanship program, the Infantry School is working with TRADOC to field an M16A2 rifle that is equipped with an optical sight for riflemen in selected operational units. The scope should increase a firer's probability of hit, particularly when he engages targets at longer ranges and under low light conditions. Additionally, both the Weaponeer and MACS training devices will be equipped with an alternate rifle fitted with a power scope to facilitate marksmanship training with optics. Accordingly, our new marksmanship program and its standards may also be revised to reflect this increased capability.

Infantry commanders must recognize that the demand for weapon proficiency and basic marksmanship in our Infantrymen is as great today as it has ever been and that these are perishable skills that require continuous sustainment. Marksmanship training, therefore, must be emphasized at all levels, and it must be challenging. Just as any professional achieves success in his field mastering the tools of his trade, the Infantryman achieves success in battle by hitting what he shoots at, not occasionally, but every time. This goal is attainable, if the program is supported by the chain of command.

Regardless of the intensity of the conflict, the Infantryman is the ultimate weapon. We at the Infantry School and you Infantry leaders in the field must ensure that we have done our part to produce a fully qualified professional Infantryman who can perform his mission under any conditions.

